

TRIBUTE TO CELIA CRUZ

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ms. Celia Cruz, known as the "Queen of Salsa," who is being presented with the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal for her countless contributions to American culture and music for more than 40 years. I would also like to thank Ms. Cruz for her generous donation of a marvelous gown to the National Museum of American History which will be included in the exhibit "Moda y Musica: Stage, Fashion and Style" in commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Throughout her childhood in Havana, Cuba, Ms. Cruz's passion for music was well-known. As a young adult she became more serious about this passion. Already noted for her *pregón* singing (a vocal style which evolved from the calls, chants, and cries of street vendors) and various songs that had earned her local fame, Cruz enrolled at the Conservatory of Music to study voice and theory. Ms. Cruz has always appreciated the power of music, particularly the power of salsa and other forms of Hispanic music. Salsa music is the pulse of many Hispanic cultures and has in recent years been discovered and revered by people throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Cruz left Cuba in 1960 and began recording with the legendary Tito Puente and his band in the United States, where they brought the heat and rhythm of Cuba and Puerto Rico to the streets of New York City, Puente's birth city. Ms. Cruz went on to marry her long-time friend and colleague Pedro Knight on July 14, 1962. Knight was the first trumpeter of Cruz's famed orchestra, La Sonora Matancera, and had known the singer for over 14 years. Knight has served as Cruz's protector, manager, and musical director ever since and gave her the golden "Salsa" engraved earrings she still wears.

Throughout Ms. Cruz's illustrious career, she has toured the world and appeared in numerous films, most notably the 1992 release, "Mambo Kings." She also played the role of La Gracia Divina in the groundbreaking opera "Hommy" at Carnegie Hall in 1973. Ms. Cruz has recorded over 70 albums. Many fans say that while her albums are among their most treasured, nothing compares to hearing the singer live in concert. Critics around the world have noted that she electrifies the stage. These accomplishments have earned Ms. Cruz the prestigious James Smithson Bicentennial Medal, awarded under the authorization of the Secretary of the Smithsonian to people who have made distinguished contributions to the advancement of society and culture.

After nearly half a century of high-energy concerts, album recordings, interviews and other speaking engagements, Ms. Cruz is still in high demand. To illustrate that fact, Mr. Speaker, I should mention that Ms. Cruz took home the 2000 Latin Grammy award for Best Salsa Performance. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Celia Cruz on earning the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal and in thanking her for decades of legendary music and for her terrific spirit.

TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS TO YASSER ARAFAT—UTTERLY UN-ACCEPTABLE

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to a series of recent news reports indicating that the State Department is developing a plan to pressure Israel to make territorial concessions to Yasser Arafat. The latest indications point to Israel even having to give up part of Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, such a proposal is utterly unacceptable.

I find it hard to believe that anyone would choose now as the time to put pressure on our only democratic friend in the Middle East, a friend that has been at the mercy of terrorists for decades.

According to a recent poll, the vast majority of Palestinians oppose the American air strikes against Afghanistan, and one in four believes terrorism against the United States is okay.

Terrorism is terrorism wherever it occurs: New York, Washington, Jerusalem, or Tel Aviv. Until Yasser Arafat rids himself of his ties to terrorism, he should not be rewarded with statehood.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "VIETNAM VETERANS BILL FOR ALASKA NATIVES"

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation to provide for the equitable treatment of Alaska Native Vietnam veterans. My bill will amend Section 41 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). This section applies to the Native Allotments for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans.

In 1998, P.L. 105-276 (Section 432) amended the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to provide Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an opportunity to obtain an allotment of up to 160 acres of land under the Native Allotment Act. There are approximately 2,800 Alaska Natives who served in the military during the Vietnam conflict who did not have an opportunity to apply for their Native allotment. When P.L. 105-276 became law, many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans were encouraged with the belief that they would finally receive recognition for their military service to the United States. Many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans saw this as their last opportunity to obtain land which had been used by their families for generations for subsistence purposes. That opportunity was lost to 1,700 Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who were excluded by the terms of P.L. 105-276 (which was harshly enforced by the previous Administration).

P.L. 105-276 contains three major obstacles which prohibit Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an opportunity to select and obtain their Native allotment. These obstacles are so for-

midable that 48% of the total Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotment applications which have been filed (as of September 27, 2001) have been rejected [according to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)]. The BLM also reports that only 116 applications for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans' allotments have been filed and 56 of those applications have been rejected. The reasons for all but 16 of the rejections are for one of the following reasons: (1) the land applied for is not available; and/or (2) the dates that the Alaska Native Vietnam veteran served during the Vietnam conflict did not coincide with those required under P.L. 105-276.

P.L. 105-276's first obstacle is: Alaska Native Vietnam veterans can only apply for land that was vacant, unappropriated, and unserved when their use of the land first began. Land that is available to Alaska Native Vietnam veterans for allotments is extremely limited or non-existent. For example, out of the 116 applications filed thus far, 36% have been rejected because the land applied for is not available under P.L. 105-276. Most land in Alaska is out of reach for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotments. Lands that are expressly not available for allotments are lands in a National Forest, selected by the State of Alaska or Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Native Corporations or under a public land law, camping sites, designated wilderness, and acquired by the federal government through gift, purchase, or exchange.

The second obstacle is: Alaska Native Vietnam veterans can only apply if they served in active military duty from January 1, 1969 to December 31, 1971 (even though the Vietnam conflict began August 5, 1964 and ended May 7, 1975). The dates of January 1969 to December 1971 were adamantly required by the previous Administration because they did not want to give up any additional federal lands in Alaska. Approximately 1,700 Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who served during the Vietnam conflict are not eligible for an allotment under existing law because they do not meet the military service date's requirement. Many of those 1,700 veterans did not even apply, but those who did have been rejected. Of all of the applications rejected, 13% were rejected because the Alaska Native Vietnam veteran's military service dates did not meet the existing requirements.

The third obstacle is: Alaska Native Vietnam veterans must prove they used the land (applied for in their native allotment application) in a substantially continuous and independent manner, at least potentially exclusive of others, for five or more years. This requirement was not in the original Native Allotment Act, nor has it been required of other Alaska Native allotment applicants. This requirement further penalizes our Alaska Native Vietnam veterans and will certainly cause many applications to be rejected. Further, adjudication of use and occupancy issues will take years and will be very costly.

My proposed legislation will increase the available land by authorizing Alaska Native Vietnam veterans to apply for land that is federally owned and vacant. The lack of available land under existing law nullifies the very purpose of granting Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an allotment benefit. This is true because most land in Alaska is not available for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotment applications under existing laws. For example,